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THE CASE OF MR. Y
PETER STEINFELS

HACKING AT THE HEAD TAX
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NEWS & VIEWS

The Vatican and China

The newly released study of the religious situation in China by Fides, the international agency attached to the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, is being hailed for "its relatively conciliatory tone and its declaration that the church desires the opening of negotiations with China."

The document has not attracted much attention in the U.S., but in Europe it is seen as an opening to the Left as important as that of several years ago leading to the mending of ties with Eastern Europe.

The study contains a certain amount of Vaticanese, but its positive thrust is unmistakable.

"The opening of China to the world should facilitate contacts with the Holy See," says Fides. "Such conversations, assuredly desired by the church, which is at the service of all men of every country, would also please all partisans of peace and of international understanding. A substantial basis for a positive dialogue is the fact that both parties recognize the fundamental rights sanctioned by the UN Charter. Moreover, public opinion is convinced that the two interlocutors are now seeking the means of establishing this dialogue, which has been desired for so long."

The document recalls past difficulties: "The church, so harshly treated and oppressed by the Communist party of the Peoples Republic of China—in spite of the fact that freedom of religious belief has been several times proclaimed—cannot do otherwise than protest its long, hard ordeal, but it continues to cherish the Chinese people while awaiting the opportunity to take up again activity in the field of its competence." (The text likens this to the stance of Maryknoll Bishop Walsh, lately released from a Chinese prison, who declared he was not a Vatican or American spy but a simple priest and missionary.)

The greater part of the study is devoted to "the great moral values in Chinese culture." If the religious character of the ancient Chinese culture—and especially of Taoism—which "has left in the soul of the people an indelible imprint" is particularly evident, then it can be said that "Chinese socialism is a moral socialism of conduct and thought, independent of the economic conditions in the country."

As examples, the study offers three extensive excerpts from *The Little Red Book* of Chairman Mao, one praising Dr. Norman Bethune, whose "total forgetfulness of self and dedication to others" should serve as a model for all Communists. Another comprised major rules and disciplinary recommendations: "Speak politely," "pay honestly for what you buy," etc.

Fides comments that even if "many of the actions of the Communist party contradict some of these directives . . . it still cannot be denied that these citations of human values are affirmed."

In this context, the study includes a long excerpt from Jean Golfin's *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung:* "In adopting Marxism, China for the first time in its existence opened itself to a Western ideology, atheistic to be sure, but embodying many Christian ideas, however distorted."

Finally, the Fides document presents "as bases for dialogue" a comparison between Chinese ideology and Christianity:

"Present-day China tends toward a mystique of disinterested labor for the benefit of others, an aspiration toward justice, an exalting of the simple and frugal life, relief for the peasant masses, and a mixing of social classes. Has not this precise point been made and remade in an incomparable manner in *Pacem in Terris* as well as in the synodal document, *Justice in the World?*

"These documents of world renown cannot have escaped the leaders of Peking. They therefore have been able to find there the best proof that religion, and especially Christianity, is not a superstition, the opium and extortioner of the people, but rather the authentic servant of man, of every man, and therefore of the Chinese considered in their integrity—that is, their temporal and eternal dimensions."

Degrees for Sale

It used to be that those phony honorary degrees were sold like dirty postcards—surreptitiously and with nervous glances over the shoulder. Not any more.

London Institutes Ltd., a British correspondence school, took a full page ad in the British edition of *Signature*, the Diner's Club magazine, to advertise a variety of 10 honorary degrees for $25 or more. (One can pay cash or use a Diner's Club or American Express credit card.)

Not to be outdone, the London Institute for Applied Research took a full-page ad of its own offering 10 honorary degrees. Nothing chintzy about the London Institute for Applied Reseach, however; it wants $100 for its honorary degrees.

Going the competition one-up, London Institute for Applied Research placed its ad —hold your seat!—in *Intellectual Digest.*

Harding's Watergate

If history, as alleged, is always prelude, the following may be instructive, President Nixon's statement of May 22 notwithstanding; it is a quote from a 1931 Walter Lippmann piece, resurrected by the *New Republic*:

"The responsible and personally honest leaders of the Republican party eight or nine years ago were confronted with the worst corruption which had disgraced the national government for 50 years. I do not say that they failed to prosecute the guilty. I do say that they exerted the whole force of their well-disciplined partisan power to smother an awakening of the public conscience and to escape the retribution which their party had earned. In this they succeeded, and the effects of their success continue to demoralize our public life. The success was based on the discovery that if the party under attack does not reply, the attackers soon exhaust their ammunition, bore the voters and lose heart themselves."

Odds and Ends

—Another incident to support the old saw that nothing's happened till it's been published in the *New York Times*: the story about Herb Klein's resigning as White House director of communications to go with Metromedia, the broadcasting conglomerate. The story broke in *Variety*, and was largely ignored, except by the underground press. *Boston Real Paper* picked up *Variety*'s story May 23. On May 26, the *Times* frontpaged the information. Bang! Instant pick-up by the rest of the media, with full credit to the *Times* as the originator.

— The New York *Daily News* recalls that William Egan Colby, new director of the CIA," is a long-time spy who for several years headed the controversial 'Project Phoenix,' a program of political assassination directed at suspected Communist leaders in South Vietnam." (See "From the Ashes: Phoenix," *Commonweal*, 4/20/73.)

— For New Yorkers who might not know what Senator Scott meant when he said Daniel Ellsberg had a lot of "gall," the *Times* bracketed an explanation: "[Gall is a rough translation of 'chutzpah.']"

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Church in Anguish

Sonoma, Calif.

To the Editors: Henry Ten Kortenaar writes of the Italian church [Mar. 30] but surely Fr. DeRosa's quote applies universally: "Industrialization and urbanization have not created but only revealed . . . that the religion experience . . . was based more on traditions than on a personal relationship with Christ." There in a couple dozen words you have the diagnosis of the sickness afflicting religion today. Materialism vs. mysticism.

Six hundred years ago Juliana of Norwich foresaw this illness, and the drastic treatment we are undergoing today: "My Church shall be shaken in sorrow and anguish . . . as men shake a cloth in the wind . . . I shall break you from your vain affections and your vicious pride . . . and after that I shall gather you and make you meek and mild, clean and holy, by coming to Me."

The prognosis is hopeful, but the cure may well take another six hundred years. JUSTINE CAREY

Scientists & Religion

Princeton, N.J.

To the Editors: On page 258 of your number of 18 May 1973, I find myself referred to by the distinguished sociologist, Prof. Talcott Parsons, in the following terms:

"As Institute physicist Freeman Dyson notes, 'There are a lot of scientists who consider religion as a childhood disease.' [. . .] I should, of course, consider the view of religion as 'a childhood disease' as entirely primitive from a socio-psychological and scholarly point of view, but we must be aware that even among intellectually very bright people, there are those who consider that a subject matter which they disapprove of and derogate should not be the subject for study by serious scholars. Though I do not know any

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REFORM, HE SAYS

You have to hand it to Mr. Nixon for one thing: for a man up to his armpits in the malodorous swamp of Watergate, it takes real nerve to suggest that what the country needs at this time is a bipartisan commission to study election reform and report back in nine months. Watergate is really not so unusual, runs the Presidential argumentation; corruption is always if regrettably present in politics and is to be found in both political parties. Why not, then, have a dignified, leisurely investigation of the whole subject by a carefully chosen commission, with recommendations brought in after Watergate is—hopefully—more or less forgotten?

As a self-serving effort to divert public and Congressional attention away from the spreading scandal in his own Administration, President Nixon's ploy is not likely to fool even Julie and David. Watergate does not simply represent the kind of tactics both parties engage in more or less as a matter of course; it is, happily, *sui generis*, and that fact should not be obscured. But aside from being at this point a typically devious Nixon maneuver, is there any merit in the general idea of a commission on election reform?

What is proposed is a 17-member bipartisan commission. This body would be asked to recommend major reforms in current campaign procedures and to make suggestions designed to insure fair election practices. In particular, the group would consider the need for new controls in order to limit campaign contributions and spending, to insure full disclosure of all political gifts, to provide free time for candidates on radio and television, and the like. To monitor and enforce the new regulations, the commission would presumably urge the creation of a new and permanent election-watching body.

Nor is this all. In his message to Congress, Mr. Nixon suggested consideration by such a commission of the idea of one six-year term for future Presidents, and of the possibility of doubling the term of members of the House from two years to four—both changes which would require a Constitutional amendment. Neither idea is new, and President Nixon urged study rather than making flat recommendations, but presumably he brought these examples up to indicate how broad he thought the commission's mandate

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should be. Significantly, not one person at the White House meeting on the matter so much as whispered the word "Watergate."

Anyone who thinks election financing and campaigning in general do not need drastic reform cannot read. We still do not know the full extent of recent GOP machinations—one of the latest revelations has been that Republican money even played a part in the 1970 Wallace campaign. But there have been enough disclosures already, surely, to make painfully clear the pressing need for reforms. From soiled money laundered in Mexico to unpasteurized *quid pro quo* donations from the dairy industry to the final sordid revelations of Watergate, it is clear that the last Presidential campaign was indelibly marked by dirty dollars and even dirtier tricks—and the democratic process that is at the heart of our political system was thereby corrupted.

Reform is needed, therefore, badly—but at this point a commission is not. There is a time limit on public attention, and in nine months when the commission would make its recommendations, public interest in election reform might well be seriously eroded. Several bills bearing directly on the crucial questions involved in election reform are already pending in Congress; rather than establishing a commission, these measures should be seriously debated and improved. And all of this should be done against a background of our most complete text on political corruption to date: Watergate. At this stage in our national history, the most valuable step in reform would be to ferret out the whole story behind that sore on the body politic, and to completely expose all involved. With that done, the nation could then move ahead to substantial reform in the electoral process. If that is not done, and done fully, the whole notion of election reform is laughable.

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Hacking at The Head Tax

Hillel Butman of the Soviet Union was arrested in June, 1971, and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for political crimes. Under strict regime confinement, he is allowed no visitors. Outside communications are rationed to one parcel and one letter a year.

Youra Berkovsky, an engineer, and his wife, a teacher, were both dismissed from their jobs in August, 1972. Their immediate crime: wanting to emigrate to Israel. All three however, in the eyes of many Soviets, share a more direct criminal connection: they are Jewish.

Although freedom of religious worship is expressly provided by the Soviet Constitution, the evidence supports Jewish leaders' charges of official harassment:

—Not a single Yiddish or rabbinical class is in operation in the USSR. The number of synagogues has dwindled from 450 in 1956 to 60 today, and few of them are actively functioning.

—Jewish authorities cannot publish periodicals or devotional literature. They cannot have official contacts with churchmen abroad, unlike the exchanges permitted Protestant, Catholic and Moslem sects.

—Government newspapers and radio broadcasts have aired anti-Semitic attacks. Articles entitled, "Zionism, a Racist Ideology" and "Zionism and the Swastika" have appeared.

—The number of Jews holding high industrial posts is limited. An educational quota system, the key to career advancement, operates, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, "to the particularly severe disadvantage of the Jewish population." In 1970, Jewish students comprised a falling 2.5 percent of university enrollments.

The most serious repressive incident occurred last August when the Soviet Presidium adopted an "education tax." Any citizen emigrating to a non-socialist country had, henceforth, to first repay the state for its educational expense. The fee ranged from $5-35,000 based on one's educational level and profession. Yet how was a scientist making $300 a month to raise a $22,000 exit fee?

The "head tax" has galvanized opposition abroad and within the United States among political and religious spokesmen. The American Jewish Committee and the National Council on Soviet Jewry have mounted a nationwide educational campaign coupled with mass rallies; an estimated 100,000 marched in a demonstration in New York on May 6.

This campaign of sustained political protest has apparently made Soviet officials anxious about their public image. More exit visas are being issued. Prior to 1969, only 3,000 were issued annually. Last year, the number of visas granted rose to 32,000. However, American Jewish officials contend that most of the visas are granted to less educated Soviets, those who live outside the large cities and members of such independent and resistant national groupings as Ukrainians and Georgians. Emigration, in such cases, serves national policy by lowering the dissident population.

Among the million Jews living in Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad, visa applications are often denied and their filing results in personal harassment. Accounts of job firings abound. Since unemployment is a state crime, former professionals are forced to accept menial positions (one economist has been a janitor and now earns a meager living reading to the blind) to avoid being tried as "parasites of the state."

Last month, the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry held executive session in Washington to plan further political strategy. Both the National Council and the Task Force are finding more sympathy

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for remedial relief from the legislative rather than the executive branch.

When the Task Force's executive director, Sister Ann Gillen, and thirty other religious representatives attended a State Department briefing, they heard Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jack Armitage say that, "to press this problem to something of a showdown with the Soviets would be a mistake." He ruled out strong diplomatic action saying it could antagonize relations and possibly sour the current climate of detente.

Armitage termed emigration a matter of "extreme sensitivity" to the Russians. He implied that State's low profile might be some *quid pro quo* for Soviet silence on our involvement in Cambodia and the Middle East. The attendees pressed on Armitage that morality should take precedence over other interests. One delegation member expressed his shock at State's relative disinterest: "In an age after Auschwitz, no Christians are going to stand by and allow Jews to be persecuted, intimidated or deprived of their rights in any country."

The mood was quite different the next day in meetings with Senator Henry Jackson and Representative Charles Vanik of Ohio. The conferees' indignation spurred talk of action rather than resignation. Both legislators have sponsored an amendment to the East-West Trade Bill that would deny Most-Favored-Nation trade status (granting Russian exports the lowest tariff rates in effect) to any country that denies its citizens the right to emigrate or imposes more than a nominal charge on emigration documents.

What should worry the Russians is that Jackson's amendment has 77 Senate co-sponsors, while Vanik's resolution thas 278 House co-signers, including the endorsement of one of the House's few titans, Ways and Means chairman Wilbur Mills.

The Russians want MFN status not only to buy American agricultural products but to gain access to trade credits and financing guarantees for the purchase of high technology products like transportation systems and computers. There is a sense of exquisite irony in having the Kremlin's credit guaranteed by Chase Manhattan Bank.

Although indignant over outside meddling, Soviet officials have recently signaled that they would not let the Jewish question sabotage trade relations. They reported that last August's law was no longer being enforced. The reaction to the suspension (not cancellation) is extreme skepticism. Speakers at the Washington meeting called it a temporary sop to insure the trade bill's passage after which the tax would be reinstated.

It is against this background that President Nixon and Communist leader Leonid Brezhnev meet. If the Russian leader is greeted by cheering crowds, he will surely have his share of jeering pickets too. And if historic accords are contemplated from the Nixon-Brezhnev meeting, these may be overshadowed if not jeopardized by a question that was once a minor domestic nuisance for Soviet leaders. It is minor no more, and for Mr. Brezhnev the issue of free emigration may become what Watergate is for Mr. Nixon. THOMAS R. MULLANEY

Fr. and Mrs. Philip Berrigan

It was referred to by the media as a "press conference," and accordingly there were many ruffled feathers, particularly at AP and the *New York Times*, because the news regulars were not invited to the gathering at which Sister Elizabeth McAlister and Josephite Father Philip Berrigan announced (a) that they had married by "mutual consent" in the spring of 1969, (b) that they formalized this union in January, 1972, at Danbury Prison, and (c) that they had legalized their marital status that day—May 28. Few could understand how these two very public and somewhat extroverted personalities could reserve the big announcement of their private lives for a tiny group of communicators. The explanation is in the term "private lives"; neither conceived of the announcement as a public occasion in the formal sense.

Nor did the host to the gathering, Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan, Philip's brother, in whose apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side the eleven people, principals included, came together. All were, if not an extension of the "resistance family," at least kindred souls of a sort, with a personal as well as professional interest in "learning the news," exploring attitudes, probing incongruities, clarifying mysteries . . . such as why the marriage was kept secret going on four years. Those present were also people who might join in a toast of congratulations and good wishes. You don't complicate such moments with the querulous, the hostile, the latter-day sympathizers, the media machinists. The friendliest of the friendlies had been brought together, and for that no apologies, however impractical the step so far as news coverage was concerned. Weldon Wallace of the *Baltimore Sun* was the only daily journalist present. He scored the news beat.

A couple of the "friendlies" could not fathom what was going on. Paul Cowan of the *Village Voice*, thinking out of a Jewish tradition, wondered why in hell two people legally free to marry had to explain why they did what they were free to do. Eqbal Ahmad, thinking out of a Moslem tradition, couldn't understand either. The concept of a religious celibacy eluded understanding entirely. Ahmad, a co-defendant in the Harrisburg trial which featured Elizabeth and Phil, was the only non-writer present.

There were large moments of levity, as Eq clowned

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and Wallace, on the phone to his city desk, front-paged repeatedly into the room to settle some small detail of age or time. Dan Berrigan opined that it was all bad off-off-Broadway, whereupon Ben Bagdikian of the *Columbia Journalism Review* sketched a scenario starring two Weldon Wallaces. Generally, however, the mood was serious. It had to be. The New Berrigans were anxious that certain points be quite clear, specifically:

—*That the essential principle involved in their decision was responsible freedom.* "We see our marriage as a radical assertion of our faith," said Elizabeth and Phil jointly. "With God's grace and the help of our friends, we hope to continue to live the Gospels—in poverty, in community, and in nonviolent resistance, convinced of the contribution of religious resistance to human kind."

—*That there is no rejection of faith, nor, in a sense, of religious life.* Elizabeth revealed that she had received a "dispensation" from her religious vows, which arrived "without asking" five days after she had told an official of her order (Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary) that she had married; she signed the dispensation. Philip declared that he had notified his superiors that he will go through no church protocol of any kind towards laicization, and will not sign a "dispensation" even if one is prepared for him. "I consider myself a priest as much as ever," commented Phil. He affirmed that "in our minds, we're not leaving our religious orders voluntarily."

—*That neither considers they are attacking celibacy per se, but rather the law of celibacy.* "Celibacy is a great tradition," Philip conceded, "but only if it is an enhancement of human freedom and rights. Unless celibacy is optional and constantly renewed for very personal and public reasons, it becomes useless. The spirit of freedom is destroyed." Reminded that in one of his books [*Prison Journals*] he cites celibacy as an element basic to total commitment to a resistance movement, Phil responded: "Your education goes on. I've held for celibacy through my years as a priest—18 this spring. I honored that [celibacy] and found it to be a great assistance to me. But the consciousness of people evolves as to their consciences. Mine did. Liz's did. My thinking has changed."

—*That there were strong, if perhaps mistaken, reasons for their secrecy.* "At first, we wanted our relationship to clarify itself without pressure," they said in a statement prepared beforehand. "In the midst of that process, Philip went to prison [April, 1970]. At that point, public disclosure was impossible, since it would have put the total burden of explanation upon Elizabeth. Later in the year, we did speak to friends and family and their pain at our secrecy revealed that that had been an error in judgment on our part. As the Harrisburg trial approached, we contemplated disclosing our union but we felt that a free admission on our part would confuse both the substance of the trial and our relationship itself. Following the trial and up to the point of Philip's release in December, the separation of prison further prevented any public acknowledgment. Since that time, we have sought opportunities to publicize it and to share it with friends."

—*That they looked optimistically to the future.* For Elizabeth, the future holds the possibility of a year's imprisonment, followed by three-years' probation. (She is on appeal from a conviction for smuggling contraband letters to Philip in prison.) Philip remains on probation until September, 1975, for his anti-war activities. Nevertheless, the two expect to be able to live normal existences. They plan to form a small resistance community in Baltimore, with a limit of eight persons, where, through study of the Gospels and the works of people from Gandhi to Douglass, they hope to get back to the roots of a religious and resistance tradition, and translate that to the American scene. What does resistance mean to the New Berrigans? "It means a high level of questioning towards church and state, and then entering into acts that are liberating."

How does Dan Berrigan feel about the marriage and its consequences thus far? Joyous, for Elizabeth and Phil; distressed, over the way the respective religious orders have responded to the situation. "I think it outrageous," said Dan, "that both are excluded from their religious communities. I see it as a sign of the retardation of religious life that some of the best people continue to be forced out of religious communities. In a profound sense, it is a kind of working out of the death wish of these orders."

Dan Berrigan also regrets the squandering of another opportunity by officialdom to use situations such as this to focus new "elements of hope and insight on a totally dead scene, which is Christian marriage," and thus instill in the community "a sense of hope and joy for living experientially."

The last note caught an echo in how Father and Mrs. Philip Berrigan envision their marriage. "We're not about to give priority to our relationship," said Elizabeth, "but to the commitment that we have made"—of witness and service through a strengthening love and a continuing religious resistance. How much of this is romanticism, how much good sense, how much efficacious involvement, only the years will tell. JOHN DEEDY

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* will again appear on alternate weeks during the summer months. Forthcoming issues will be dated June 29, July 13, July 27, August 10, August 24, September 7 and September 21. From then on we will resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

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THE CASE OF MR. Y.

PETER STEINFELS

I CAME TO know Mr. Y. several years ago. Some tenants in our building had responded to a precipitous rise in the mugging rate by organizing a "watch" by the front door. Mr. Y. helped mount the operation—not for himself, he assured us, but for the others. Despite his years, he was a large, strapping man, and anyone who tried to mug him was promised, with suitable references to many years of soccer, "a good kick in the teeth." Mr. Y. had been born in Vienna, the son of a cantor. He had studied dentistry, then left Austria for the U.S. in the mid-'30s; what he did here I never quite found out, though I always imagined it had something to do with the music which was the love of his life.

When another tenant and I would take our turn at the "watch," Mr. Y. would often join us. He would lean against one wall of the front hallway, puffing, scraping, knocking his ever-present pipe, and address us, his audience, seated in folding chairs against the other wall. Mr. Y. had been struck not long before by a great personal tragedy in his family, and about this he would talk obsessively, his severe psychological distress in painful contrast with his physical vigor and the absolute certitude with which he pronounced on all subjects. At times like this, not daring to contradict him in his sorrow nor wishing to encourage it, I steered the conversation elsewhere. We talked about that period of history when fascism was on the rise in Central Europe and when all the artillery, ideological as well as military, was being drawn up for the war and the holocaust; about the Austrian Socialists and the trade unions; about the assaults of the anti-Semitic youth squads on the Jewish students at the university.

Eventually the "watch" disintegrated and I saw Mr. Y. less frequently. We greeted him or his wife in the hallway, or more often simply noted, by the strong aroma of his tobacco, that he had just used the elevator. There were rumors that Mr. and Mrs. Y. were going to move. Friends in the two apartments across from his, also Jews of Eastern origin, had left for safer districts; and the apartments were occupied by large families of Haitian blacks. Though one of the Haitian families had already lived in our building on another floor, Mr. Y. told me his wife was afraid to go out into the hall or the elevator because she could not recognize the strange faces.

Actually safety in our building seemed to increase, but that did not render the city safe. Late one evening, for instance, I found Mr. Y. pacing in front of the building in an agitated state. He had missed his wife when he went to pick her up after an opera. Eventually she arrived, via taxi, in danger of nothing graver than her husband's sputtering combination of relief and irritation. But we knew that such was not always the happy ending.

It was some time after that when I sensed a decline in Mr. Y. For one thing, he actually appeared without his pipe clenched in his teeth. Again we heard that he and his wife were buying an apartment elsewhere. Finally the day came when they moved out; I met him in the lobby on my way to work, and with honest regret I said good-bye.

We met again, however. Last week. It was in a neighborhood bank, and Mr. Y. looked ill. But he spoke enthusiastically of his new apartment in a semi-suburban section of New York —18th floor, balcony overlooking the city, absolutely modern kitchen.

"But the best thing," he added vehemently, "is that I never have to see any more black faces." (There were several within earshot, but Mr. Y. had no concern for lowering his voice.) "No black faces—that's been the best thing for my wife, too."

I felt ambushed by his outburst, angry too, yet I knew how futile any reply might be. I turned away momentarily. Mr. Y., however, continued: "Ten years ago, I was a liberal too. But we made the mistake of opening the gates to *them*. All my life liberalism has been losing." And then, perhaps picking up a thread from our past encounters, he began to talk about the Social Democrats and the outbreak of World War I and Benito Mussolini. He was interrupted by a bank attendant (black) who said she could help him now.

* * *

A decade ago the liberal reflex might have been to say that Mr. Y. is a racist, and to leave it at that. But the foundering of many liberal hopes pointed to the importance of understanding people like Mr. Y. in their full complexity. Indeed, of complexity a man like Mr. Y. has almost no end. I believe, for example, that even in his salad days of liberalism, Mr. Y. probably believed black people generally inferior; but then it is difficult to sort this out from the impression that Mr. Y. thought most of mankind inferior. No doubt, the surfacing of Mr. Y.'s racism is linked to the suffering which private events wreaked upon him in recent years, to the dissolution of the small community he had enjoyed in our building and our neighborhood, and even to the apparent sapping of that physical vigor which was so much a part of him. But the anti-Semites of Mr. Y.'s youth in Austria were also people who had personal sufferings, who underwent social disruption, and who faced physical ills—what excuses do we make for them?

The very real problem of city crime —and the special terror it holds for the elderly—is also an element in Mr. Y.'s racism, although racism was just as clearly an element in magnifying these fears. Crime and terror, how-

(Continued on page 342)

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WOMEN AND THE AMENDMENT

NANCY SCHWARTZ

The Equal Rights Amendment: is something new and coherent happening?

In American politics, you rarely get the chance to fight for an issue on the terms you want. Principles are changed to words which the courts will accept; visions are tailored to the needs of building winning coalitions. And, since political organizations are so weak in this country, their compromising in order to form coalitions is often not even noticed by observers, so that it seems as if the eventual compromise existed from the start.

The movement to support the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution is often seen as such a compromise. Many of the left give it only lukewarm support because they see it as a movement of merely legal reform not involving any real changes in the social structure. Many others who oppose the amendment comment that its supporters are merely middle-class women who want equal opportunity to succeed in the world of business, as opposed to (depending on the observer's politics) all the dedicated housewives who are at home preserving the family, or, all the hardworking women who toil in the factories of the land. The pro-ERA fight seems, from this standpoint as one of individualistic liberalism, as opposed to the older values of organic community and the newer values of union solidarity. The ERA, its opponents claim, will remove the protection that women need in the home and on the job, and hurl them into the maelstrom of modern life.

There are elements of truth in this characterization, but the matter is not so simple. It is necessary to see who is advocating what and why. For certainly the most startling alignments have occurred in the debate on the amendment—the AFL-CIO alongside the John Birch Society as opponents, and President Nixon with certain progressive unions as supporters. Religious groups have shifted their positions, some easing and others hardening their opposition. And throughout the struggle, now past its fiftieth year, the rejuvenated women's movement has grown more and more in favor of it. The organizations working most actively for the ERA include the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Political Caucus, Common Cause, and the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Unlike in 1923 when the amendment was first proposed by the National Woman's Party, today the amendment is given at least implicit support by all parts of the women's movement. The question remains as posed at first: Does the ERA fight represent politics as usual in America, or is something new and coherent happening?

The ERA, the 23rd amendment to the Constitution, states that,

1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

It finally passed Congress in March 1972 and must be ratified by 38 of the states by 1979 for it to become law. Within four months of its passage, 20 states approved it, and since then another 10 have done so. Of the remaining 20 states, it has been defeated in 6. It is still to be considered in 14, of which 5 are left in session for this year. (Some states have switched their votes: Connecticut defeated it last spring and recently passed it, and Nebraska did the reverse, but the latter is not expected to remove the counting of Nebraska as an ap-

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proval.) The remaining states are primarily in the South —Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—and Midwest—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri—as well as Nevada, Arizona, and Maine. With fairly strong anti-ERA campaigns going on in many of these states, the prospects of ERA's passing eight more states now look possible but difficult.

In the Family

The ERA will affect laws about the family—marriage, divorce, alimony, child support, and child custody. Any law which makes a distinction between the rights of men and women in marriage will be invalid. The courts are expected to rule that where previous legislation denies a right or restricts the freedom of one sex (e.g., the wife's right to set up a legal domicile), the ERA makes such a law unconstitutional; and where previous laws confer a right, benefit and privilege to one sex (e.g., the mother's right to alimony), these laws apply to both sexes. In divorce cases, the financial needs of either parent will now be equal factors in deciding who gets alimony (which remains however, an upper-middle-class phenomenon), and the presumption will no longer be that women will keep the children.

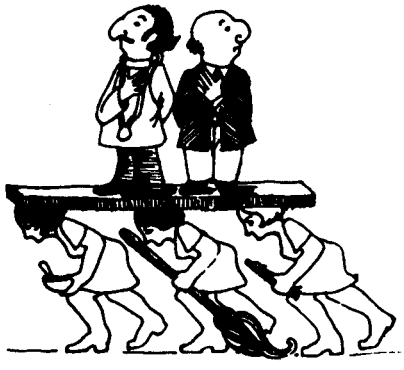
To be sure, the ERA is a law about laws, so that only matters which reach the level of state action fall under its purview. The private relations within a family may continue as before. But the ERA may contribute to a new climate of opinion by enforcing new presumptions about what is to happen if a marriage breaks up. If more fathers know that they may have custody of the children, they may start taking more responsibility in the home and develop the historically "feminine" virtues of nurturance and tenderness toward children.

The ERA, then, challenges the social division of labor between men and women, one in which women exist primarily in the home, attending to the physical and emotional needs of their families while financially and politically dependent on their men. The ERA will require equal access of women and wives to property and credit where these are subject to law, hence ending certain restrictions to women in the market.

Opposition to the amendment comes from people who consider woman's role to have been protected, and, more important, from those who want man's position to remain privileged. Individual housewives across the country have testified that they like their lot and fear the alternatives. Most of them come as part of one of several organizations—Stop ERA, Happiness of Women (HOW), the League of Housewives, and others at the state level such as Scratch Women's Lib. It has been alleged, agrees the President of NOW, that the John Birch Society has aided some of these organizations by funding, and, what is more important, by putting out misinformation that scares women into joining HOW and other groups. The Ku Klux Klan, the Billy Jean Hargis Christian Crusade, and the Communist Party are also opposed to the amendment.

Certain religious groups have opposed the amendment, such as the National Council of Catholic Women, the National Council of Jewish Women and a coalition of Orthodox Jewish Rabbis. Some coalitions of nuns such as the National Coalition of American Nuns have campaigned for the ERA, while others, as in Arkansas, have opposed it. The Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis was outspoken in his opposition to the amendment, which failed in Minnesota; the opposition of important members of the Catholic Church in Virginia may have similar effects. In Ohio, opposition is coming from the Eight-County Diocesan Council of Cleveland Women and the Catholic Federation of Women's Clubs of Greater Cleveland. And the national AFL-CIO opposes the ERA, citing the "heavy family responsibilities" of women as one of the reasons they need protection.

The opposition sees the ERA as threatening the traditional family. As we have shown, the ERA does challenge the principle of that family structure, the doctrine of separate but equal (if that) as heretofore applied to women. The pro-ERA claim is that to be alone in the home with only the chores and the children is not a privilege, that the freedom not to take a job is the freedom to be powerless, and that the private power-plays



of the mid-century American mother to make up for her lack of public power are destructive to herself and her children.

This is not an argument about causality; the ERA is not causing or even hastening the breakdown of the traditional family. The family is dissolving, or at least changing, because of developments in American capitalism which take more and more functions away from the family. The factory system and the consumer-goods industries, for example, took production out of the home, and the needs of a specialized job market which required complex skills and knowledge made public education necessary (at least for men). The mobility and the technical rationality in those jobs and that education have been destroying the older religious beliefs in established community, natural limits and God. The

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easiest thing for Nixon's society to do is to talk of the family ethic and the work ethic and then to look the other way; when in fact women are entering the work force in greater and greater numbers and now need adequate day-care for their children. The question that the women's movement raises in response to the changes in the family is this: will these changes be at the expense of women, or can they shape this trend to get out from under?

In the Labor Market

The second real trend that sets the conditions for the debate on ERA principles is the entry of women into the work force. Women now comprise 38 percent of all workers, which is the height of a gradual upward trend since the last century, with sudden jumps toward the end of wars (when there is a shortage of male laborers) followed by sudden drops. The current figure even exceeds the 1945 high of 35 percent. It might even be argued that one of the reasons for the resurgence of the women's movement in the late 1960s was that, while many men were off in Vietnam, more women were working and developing higher hopes than ever before. But now, five years later, with the troops home and jobs less available, the ERA heightens certain contradictions in the work force.

Where labor conditions are covered by law, the ERA will require treatment of women equal to that of men. Opponents claim that this will remove the protective labor legislation won for women after such a hard struggle early in the century. This legislation in the various states sets limits on the number of hours that women can work (often on overtime and night work), and on the amount of weight that women can lift, and has other provisions about occupational health and safety (rest and meal periods, ventilation and lighting).

Supporters argue that in the area of labor law, the ERA is redundant. Even without the ERA, many of these state laws are being struck down by the courts on the basis of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (amending the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 which established a federal minimum wage, although it covers only half of the work force), Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the directives of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Secondly, in labor law as in family law, the courts have ruled that burdens imposed on women by legislation are unconstitutional and that benefits conferred by legislation are to be extended to men. But the enforcement of this principle, as well as the former laws, depends on the continued political power of unions to fight for and be watchdogs for this legislation. It is unfortunately true that both the size of the unions and the quality of their politics, at least at the national level, are not what they were before the Cold War. Some unions now actually want to stem or turn the tide of labor equality; perhaps they hope by defeating this constitutional amendment to alter the course of the courts' interpretations.

The argument against the previous protective legislation is that it denies women extra income and promotional opportunities. Federal law (which covers all plants engaged in interstate commerce) stipulates that anyone working over 40 hours a week must be paid at time-and-a-half. Various state laws and union agreements generally go further, winning overtime pay for anything over eight hours in a day, for Saturday work, and double-time on Sunday. Since most states prohibit women from working overtime, only men get this extra pay. (How many women currently work overtime and do not get paid for it is a related question!)

A justifiable fear about the repeal of this legislation is that women will now be required to do mandatory overtime or else lose their jobs. That this often the situation for men is shown by the fact that the United Automobile Workers (UAW) is currently trying to win the right to refuse to work overtime. But where women have had a voice, they are willing to risk mandatory overtime and urge their male co-workers to join them in the fight for voluntary overtime. Unions in favor of this position now include the UAW, Teamsters, District 65, and three unions that as recently as two years ago were opposed to the ERA—the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), Amalgamated Meat Cutters, and Communication Workers. In California, Union WAGE (Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality) has lobbied (albeit unsuccessfully so far) for a bill that would extend the state's protective laws to men before the ERA takes effect.

But there remain unions opposed, most notably, the International Ladies Garment Workers (ILGWU), Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and Hotel and Restaurant Workers. (To put this labor opposition in perspective, note that the three unions include only 25 percent of all women unionized or 3 percent of all women in the labor force.) These unions would be opposed to the amendment even if they were sure that the courts would apply the "benefit extension/burden restriction" principle mentioned earlier. For these unions fear the deeper economic effects of even "protected" equality—the opening up of the labor force to more women and the increase of labor costs of women. Partly this is due to the nature of the industries in which these unions exist: many small competitive firms which can "runaway" to the South where costs are lower (due to the lack of local labor legislation and the weakness of unions). Unlike, say, the auto industry, the garment industry is only partially unionized; which is partly due to the structure of the industry and partly the fault of the union. The ILGWU leadership is notorious for protecting only the most short-run interests of its workers (if those) by identifying with the priorities of man-

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agement. It sees legislation that will help the general interests of labor, like minimum wage legislation or the ERA, as threatening the actual jobs of its members. Like the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, which lobbied against the ERA, the ILGWU wants to keep labor costs down. (Contrast to this a union like District 65, of Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Clerks, which has responded more creatively than the ILGWU to the threat of runaway shops. District 65 constantly strives to organize new shops entering the industry, and uses its union strength to win high severance pay for workers if the shop threatens to leave, thereby diminishing its incentive to move.)

Whether or not protective legislation was promoted by unions with the express intent of keeping the labor force limited to men—and there is some evidence from 1836 on to suggest this—it certainly has had that effect. It is indeed notable that such protection was often not sought or won for men; and where it was, the Supreme Court struck it down or only allowed it for women, as in *Lochner v. N.Y.* in 1905 and *Muller v. Oregon* in 1907. The path to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 requiring at least certain protections for men and women was paved with many fights, in which unions are certainly not the main force to blame. Nevertheless, these unions did have reasons pressuring them to accept this half a loaf, for the men. Many people still argue that women were hard to organize into unions and hence needed this extra protection. But today this argument is becoming out of date. Women were hard to organize when they thought of themselves as transitory and secondary workers. Often they were right to think so, for women often served as a reserve army of unemployed to enter and leave the ranks whenever capital demanded it. But now, more women are working than ever before and remaining in the work force for a greater proportion of their lives; they are now workers in their own right. In 1970, 43 percent of all women sixteen years of age and over were working and half of all women between the ages of 35 and 64 were in the work force.

The IUE, explaining the reversal of its historical opposition to the amendment, no longer analyzed women as replacements for men in the job market, but cited consumerism and inflation as two causes making it necessary for women to be the second wage-earner in more American families. About 60 percent of all women working are married and living with husbands who are also working; about 60 percent of these husbands have incomes of less than $7,000 (a Bureau of Labor Statistics "modest but adequate income for an urban family of four"). Put another way, 40 percent of all married women are working.

Increasing numbers of women have found the need to be productive in their public as well as their private life. Unless, of course, one believes, as the AFL-CIO still does, that "heavy family responsibilities" are and should be unique to women. On that point, the pro-ERA movement deeply disagrees.

So, in the end, what does one make of the situation? What does it mean to have women entering the labor market on equal footing with men? In the short-run it means increased competition and insecurity among sectors of the working class. In the longer run, it puts heavy requirements on labor and its allies to redefine the situation, in thought and action, to change the structure of the job market in the direction of more jobs, more pay or less work, and part-time work for men as well as women. Such changes may entail a kind of socialism and that prospect should not be ignored. But it is sadly typical of American politics that the issue is being discussed in terms too narrow for considering its fundamental implications.

In the Polity

What will be the effect of the amendment on the place of women in the polity, as citizens? Here too the ERA will allow women to move into the public space, into the schools and onto the juries. Policies of state schools which require higher standards for women to be admitted, and laws in some states which exempt women *qua* women from jury duty will be struck down.

Women, finally, will be subject to the draft. It is annotable here that women of the left as well as the right and center are willing, almost eager, to assume this burden. For again, it is clear that in order to have power in a situation one has first to be needed—to be a productive or a necessary laborer providing an essential service; one cannot strike if one is not working, one cannot resist if one is not draftable. We felt the pain of powerlessness in the 1960s while the real citizens, the men, could resist the war and hasten its end.

The women's movement is not individualistic; it believes in collective action. It appreciates those struggles which were once progressive for women, but which now, given other changes, are no longer protective but restrictive. The vision of the movement is of a classless people free to exert care and power in the community of others, and not the current reality of people at liberty to be isolated and bored. It often stresses privacy and individual achievement, not as highest ideals but as stepping-stones on the way to other ideals, for we never even had these privileges. (It also stresses these to get reforms through the courts.) It has emerging principles of productive labor and public power for all women, as well as meaningful work and private virtue for all men. The vision is of new forms of love and responsibility for adults and children, and new kinds of beauty and culture. The vision is there, and emerging stronger; the ERA fight may seem to confuse and compromise it, but that is illusory: only as the fight for legal equality is being won is a fuller politics beginning.

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VARIETIES OF CATHOLICISM

GARY MacEOIN

The godfather constitutes a key element in Latin American life. Baptism is an essential social ceremony for those of every class and race. It integrates the child into society, assuring him of the *patrones*, in the person of his godparents, without whom he could not make his way in the world.

The waters of baptism have consequently washed practically every one of Latin America's 300 million people, 90 percent in Catholic ceremonies and 10 percent in Protestant. But does that make the hemisphere a hundred percent Christian? Hardly.

The nature and extent of one's integration into Christianity vary significantly with the culture to which one belongs. The two coexisting and overlapping cultures are that of the haves and that of the have-nots. Argentines and Chileans, because of a high European immigration, and Mexicans—because of their social revolution—used to consider themselves different. They are now coming to recognize the basic similarity to their neighbors caused by a common dependence as members of the Third World on the rich decision-making nations.

Marcio Moreira Alves, exiled Brazilian politician and writer, recently said that 5 percent of Brazilians form the oligarchy, with 15 percent in the middleclass as lawyers, doctors, clergy, storekeepers, shop foremen, and so on, 40 percent earning a minimum wage (now $40 a month in an economy in which living costs are nearly as high as in the United States), and 40 percent at a still lower level. I not only accept his analysis but gladly extrapolate it to all Latin America, subject to Luis Alberto Sánchez's reminder that "all our statistics are poetry." Poetry, understood as such, often tells us more than the computer. I would simply clarify that we are not dealing with mathematically or physically disjoined units but with segments of an economic and social spectrum.

The upper 20 percent shelters under the umbrella of the industrial West, sharing its concerns, values and outlook. To the extent that it is Catholic, its concept of religion is similar to that of Catholics in the United States. Up to ten years ago, the Church was for it an institution that mediates salvation in the terms formulated by the Council of Trent. It was the storehouse of the truths man needs to be saved and the purveyor of the sacraments which deliver that salvation. The good Catholic did what the priest told him. He sinned frequently but invariably came back to the priest to restore him to the state of grace. Since Vatican Council II, his evaluation of his relationship to the Church and to God has followed much the same evolution as that of its counterpart in the United States. The power structures of the Churches are concentrated in these upper strata, and they supply all the personnel—apart from outside missionaries who man the institutions.

Appallingly little study has been made of the religion of the other 80 percent who live on the margin of or outside Western culture and society. For what I will say, I am enormously indebted to Felipe Berryman, a priest from Los Angeles who has lived for the past several years in and as part of a slum in Panama, and has studied the poor in many parts of Latin America.

Popular religion, Father Berryman says, never accepted the Tridentine theology and pastoral practice. It fulfils the same function as do other religions of "primitive" peoples, those whose lives are at the mercy of unknown and uncontrollable forces and whose preoccupations in consequence are death, health and immediate temporal concerns.

The priest's presence in this popular Catholicism is important but marginal. When he ministers to the people, he thinks they are doing one thing, while they think they are doing something else. He will offer a Mass in honor of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception; for them, the rite honors Yemanja or Janaina, an African goddess of the sea and of fertility. When Mass ends, they move to her temples in the forest to continue their adoration. What the priest says is often different from what the people hear. The experimental parish of San Miguelito in Panama, headed by priests from Chicago, produced a Guide for Catechists in 1961 but revised it radically in 1966. They had discovered in the interval that religious terminology was "completely vitiated" among the people. When the Guide said "sacrament," the people understood "money"; when "sin," "sex."

This popular religion has been no more affected by Vatican Council II than it was by Trent, though Vatican II may yet touch and possibly transform it in a way I shall describe later. What is already modifying it is the massive movement from settled rural life, with its social controls and seasonal festivals, to the condition

GARY MACEOIN's *most recent book is* Revolution Next Door: Latin America in the 1970's *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston).*

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of urban proletariat—the coming majority class—in city slums. What the end result will be is far from clear. While the new proletariat remains impotent vis-à-vis reality, it will have as much need as before of a protecting religion. But to what extent will the Catholic symbols survive? The spectacular upsurge in the popularity of the *candomble*, *umbanda*, *quimbanda* and other Brazilian syncretisms of African and indigenous religions in the *favelas* of Rio and Sao Paulo and their growing institutionalization cannot be dismissed.

The 80 Percent

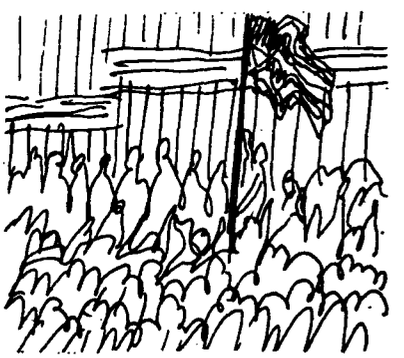
To return to our poetic percentages, all this leaves 20 percent of the population of Latin America as the group we talk about in our surveys of Christianity, as in those of politics, economics and sociology. The level of faith or the identification with the living Christ in the 80 percent is something that I don't think anyone has analyzed. Father Berryman suggests it is low when he sends us to anthropologists rather than theologians for its understanding. My own view is that most of these people are condemned to live at a subhuman level, and that one must be human before one can be Christian. Father José Comblin, the Belgian sociologist who worked in Chile and Brazil for 14 years, presented a somewhat different perspective, however, in an interview he gave in Europe last March after he was expelled from Brazil. He spoke of "a spontaneous Christianity of peoples who have never known true evangelization, a Christianity not due to the action of the Church or its structures (such as parishes), but imposed by the people's sense of love, their openness to their neighbors." But if this is Christianity, it raises previously unimagined questions about transmission of Christ's message by means other than historical filiation with the apostles, in effect, a separate revelation.

The separation of this 80 percent, however, alters radically the relative positions of Catholicism and Protestantism. The Protestants have already been viewed and have usually viewed themselves as a miniscule and defensive minority. Actually, most Protestants are found in or close to the 20 percent and their self-identification as a long-persecuted minority gives them a deep sense of denominational unity and commitment. In consequence, as a power structure for good or evil, they are neck and neck with the Catholic institution.

In passing, I should note one important reason why Protestantism has not been exercising power commensurate with what it possesses. There is an almost total lack of relationship between the traditional denominations (Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.) on the one hand and the rapidly expanding sects (Adventists, Pentecostals, etc.) on the other. The sects go it alone with a fundamentalist theology stressing the other world and refusing involvement in social concerns. But this rejection of social commitment may be transitional, as is suggested by recent developments in Chile where Pentecostals have been established for more than 60 years and now constitute nine-tenths of the country's 700,000 Protestants. Interestingly, this Chilean Pentecostal movement is entirely indigenous. Only one foreigner—a Methodist named Hoover—was involved.

I am not prophesying a proximate challenge by Protestantism to Catholicism's long occupancy of center stage in Latin America. Something very different is happening. Since Vatican II, the Catholics are spread out across the theological and social spectrum in much the same way as in other parts of the world, but with the main stress of the progressives on social issues within a theological framework (theology of liberation). The traditional Protestant denominations have experienced a parallel evolution, and the progressive Protestants and progressive Catholics have formed a solid alliance. Meanwhile, ecumenism as a slogan has become everywhere popular, forcing the conservatives to muffle their traditional vendettas. At times they even make common cause against their combined progressive wings.

The game of percentages is here also popular. During the Council I canvassed Brazilian bishops and churchmen for an article for *Life* (Spanish edition) and came up with a formula. "Of Brazil's 200 bishops," their consensus said, "some 30 are committed to work for change,



while half that number is equally convinced that change would be bad. The others either don't understand the issues or can't get excited either way. They follow where they are led."

That was before Brazil's military dictatorship (installed in 1964) had made its full weight felt. Charles Antoine, a French priest who was a pastor in Sao Paulo from 1964 to 1969, chaplain to a Catholic youth group, and founder of a religious information service, has documented the resulting change. His book is about to be issued in English by Sheed & Ward in London and Orbis Books here.

Churchmen tried at first but gradually abandoned the effort to maintain a sociocritical stand against the government pressures. Of the 30 bishops committed to work for change, only three or four still speak, and they are impotent because their following among the bishops has

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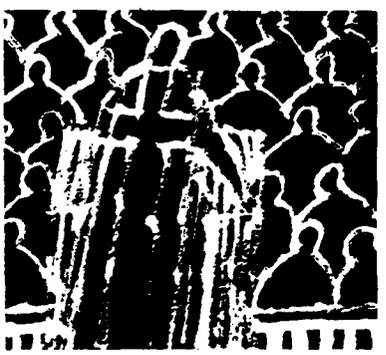
deserted them. Some, like Cardinal Eugenio Sales of Rio de Janeiro, went through a reverse evolution as shocking to their admirers as that of John Joseph Wright in his progression from Worcester through Pittsburgh to the cardinalate and the Roman Curia. As Antoine concludes, and I agree with him, the Brazilian Church was as "profoundly conservative" when it supported a reforming regime in 1963 as when today it supports a reactionary and repressive one. In neither case has it been the protector of spiritual and human values, the prophet it should be if attentive to the Gospel message.*

I believe this is a characteristic not only of the Brazilian Church but of the Catholic Church in all Latin America. The significant fact is that it remains what it was made by Spain and Portugal, a servant of the state, rewarded for performing certain social and educational tasks allotted to it by the state. Some countries have an established Church. In others there is separation of Church and State. Some profess affection for the Church. Others profess anticlericalism. But all that is facade. The underlying facts remain the same.

For reasons little related to Latin America's problems or needs, the Vatican is committed to maintaining this subordination of the Church in Latin America to the hemisphere's reactionary regimes. Particularly since *Humanae Vitae*—as a bishop recently remarked to me —Rome's primary concern in the naming and promotion of bishops has been "blind obedience, Counter-Reformation style." This limits its choice to the conservative wing of the Church. As a consequence, as in the United States, progressive bishops and priests leave, usually the most highly educated of a group whose average education level is low. And seminaries close down. Ironically, the emptiest seminaries are the ones with the most progressive regimes. As students see the chasm between their definition of purpose and the institutions they would have to support if ordained, they simply walk away.

The position of the Church progressives in all of this is full of anomalies. Within the institution, they gained the intellectual leadership during and immediately after the Council, and they retain it. The documents of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops held at Medellín, Colombia, give them a legitimation that cannot be challenged directly. Ignoring the warnings of Pope Paul when he opened the meeting during his visit to Colombia, the bishops there assembled approved a 40,000-word call to revolution, offering a liberating God to replace the God of private property. They denounced the oppressing power used by institutions to impose violence, the neocolonialism of the national oligarchies, and the external neocolonialism of "the international monopolies and the international imperialism of money" which support the system.

Medellín polarized the Church in Latin America. Groups of progressives (mostly priests) like Golconda in Colombia, the Quito Reflection Group in Ecuador, Onis in Peru, the Third World Movement in Argentina, hailed it as official approval of their challenge to the existing order. But nowhere did the institution accept their invitation to implement the Medellín guidelines. Instead, we saw once more that most sanctioned of Latin American maneuvers, one going back to colonial times when the local authorities solemnly accepted the latest decree from Madrid. The Medellín decisions were gratefully



received and carefully filed. A few bishops moved ostentatiously from drafty old palaces, but with the sole exception of Dom Helder I have found none who did not end up in a modern upper-class residence in a modern upper-class neighborhood. Few if any of the touted dispositions of Church estates went farther than the tokenism with which governments implemented the land reform of the Alliance for Progress.

While many progressive priests (as already noted) left the structures when they recognized the gulf between profession and action, many others hang on; and these in my view constitute the most dynamic element in the Church in Latin America today. They include a significant proportion of the outside missionaries, especially—interestingly enough—of the young Spaniards and North Americans. Here noteworthy is the recent decision of a Spanish mission society to withdraw all its members from Colombia when three or four were expelled on unproved charges of aiding guerrillas.

What seems to be forming here is a variation of the so-called underground Church, starting in each instance with a nucleus of priests, nuns, university students and intellectuals. They do not reject the institution but develop their own institution without concern for its reaction. Nor do they seek to proselytize within the upper 20 percent of the population which provides the base for the present Church institution, still less to use it as

* A recent *New York Times* report says that Brazil's bishops have begun to stake out a position as "defenders of the little man and champions of human rights." If correct, this may indeed presage a radical break with Latin American traditions, a welcome sign that the Church can break its molds. Or it may simply signal a decision by the bishops that the writing is on the wall for the reactionary regime. Withdrawal of Church legitimation was the second-last event of the dictatorships of Péron in Argentina and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.

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their own power base. Instead they go to the people, mostly to the next 40 percent who are economically related to, though culturally distinguished from, the Westernized upper strata. They try to share their life, learn their values, identify with them so that they can learn before they try to teach.

Several motives underlie the decision to write off the oligarchy and its dependent middle-class. Many may not be aware of the romantic obsession of the revolutionary intelligentsia of Russia with "the people" in the late nineteenth century, but nearly all are influenced by Marx. The university students grew up on him, and today the progressive Catholic and Protestant theologians, such people as Jordan Bishop and Julio Barreiro, openly embrace Marxism as "a revolutionary praxis." In their analysis of society, the upper strata are the willing tools of the foreign imperialists in the oppression of the people. Sociologically if not theologically, they are unredeemable. These progressives accept the Marxist criticism of religion as alienating, at least in the Latin American form in which it has served to maintain the dispossessed in fatalistic resignation.

More pragmatically, the prospect of building a viable Church for twenty-first century Latin America on that base is very dubious. The oligarchs have always viewed the Church as their servant, not their mistress. Its purpose is to help keep the people in their place, adding supernatural sanctions to the natural. Much of the middle class has long substituted the goals and values of the consumer society for those of Christianity. It rates low not only on such indices as Church attendance and support, but on attitudes to divorce and (when it was still a mark of orthodoxy) contraception. As the progressives see it, these classes and the conservative Church institution can mutually support each other in the short time left to them and it.

José Comblin has noted what is unique about the decision of the progressives. "The Church up to now has always applied the concepts of European and North American sociology regarding social classes and social mobility," he says. "These concepts are not applicable, because we are dealing with something far deeper than class inequality, namely, the existence side by side of two races, two civilizations."

The progressives not only recognize the presence of a separate civilization. Unlike the Spaniards and Portuguese when they first came in contact with the indigenous cultures of Latin America, they see the goal as the development of this popular culture, not its absorption by the imported culture of those who currently monopolize power.

To attain their goal, the progressives rely principally on an approach known as "conscientization," a word invented by the man who formulated the approach, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Significantly he has been an exile as a seditious teacher since the army seized power in Brazil in 1964. Conscientization means the development of an awareness of one's existential situation, with some of the overtones of unanticipated self-discovery conveyed by the youth culture when it talks about blowing one's mind.

Rejecting the traditional assumption that the missionary or other outsider arrives with truths which he passes on to his listeners, Freire presents the act of learning as the creation of a dialectical relationship in which the parties bring about a mutual enrichment. The discussion leader doesn't tell the peasant what is wrong with him. He helps him to reflect on what he is, where he is, and why.

Starting with an exploration of what ordinary words mean to the people, words such as poor, hungry, barefoot, land, sick, he guides the reflection to the point where it becomes obvious to the group that their relationship to the realities expressed by these and similar words is not merely a fact, still less the disposition of a wise providence, but the result of a man-devised system maintained for the benefit of the few.

The commitment to this process of arousing a sense of self-identification and class awareness among the dispossessed and proletarianized masses of Latin America is the most dynamic and most significant activity of the Latin American Church today. The theology of liberation which is widely recognized as the first major contribution of Latin Americans to theology is the—often self-conscious— effort of the clergy to justify concentration of effort on this group and in these terms. What we have here, for better or worse, is a judgment that the situation of the Church is desperate. It is a decision to downgrade the established sacristy-centered and sanctuary-centered activities of the clergy in favor of what is emphatically pre-evangelization, the formation of human beings with the hope that ultimately they will find Christ.

The Chances

Can it succeed? Perhaps I should first say that I believe it is the best of the available alternatives. Increasing numbers of informed and committed churchmen are telling us that the Christian Churches of North America and Western Europe will not survive in recognizable continuity with their present structures and forms for more than another generation or two. The prospects for the institutional Churches in Latin America are far dimmer. In addition to carrying the same supercargo as these others, they show almost no hope of breaking their traditional bonds with a social order that is doomed. If Latin America has a future, it is with the hitherto suppressed masses.

Whether the Church, even a "liberated" Church, can participate in creating and can affect the ultimate shape of the new society is more problematical. The timid first advances toward arousing a class awareness among

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the rural and urban-slum dispossessed have everywhere been repulsed by the sociopolitical equivalent of Newton's Third Law of Motion, that action and reaction are equal and opposite. The process has been tested hundreds and probably thousands of times all over Latin America and even in Asia and Africa, always with the same result. When those who were previously powerless are motivated to work together and create a power base for themselves, something as modest as a credit union or a cooperative that starts to free them from the arbitrary control of landlords and moneylenders, the initiative is snuffed out or reduced to impotence by the violent power of those who manipulate the armed might of the state.

That is what happened to the peasant leagues of Brazil's Northeast when leaders like Francisco Julião and Freire were forced or jockeyed into exile and those who stayed were hounded, tortured and killed. It was the same with the Galán experiment started in the mid-1960s in the slums of Bogotá by Marymount nuns from the United States, helped by Camilo Torres and other Colombian priests and nuns. The Colombian authorities quickly recognized the threat to the oligarchic system, expelled the United States nuns, jailed several of the Colombian priests, and persuaded the Church authorities to cooperate in silencing the priests and nuns as subversives. That action convinced Camilo Torres that progress was impossible within the structures and drove him to join the guerrillas. And Panama issued a similar warning in 1971. In circumstances which convinced all observers of complicity at a high level in the military dictatorship, Father Hector Gallego was abducted, never to be heard from again. His crime was excessive commitment to the "conscientization" of the peasants in his rural parish in Veraguas.

I recently asked Paulo Freire himself if he could cite any example of escape from this law. He admitted he could not. He was encouraged, nevertheless, by some experiments he had studied in Tanzania a short time ago. Were it not for "the bourgeois people around him," he believes President Julius Nyerere could perform the miracle. He is also optimistic about recent developments in Chile, a country whose current mood owes much to his work there from 1964 to 1969.

If the analysis of the progressives and the program based on it are correct, and I at least have no alternative to offer, the future of the Church in Latin America must be obscure. What is the likelihood that "the people" can seize power from oligarchies supported by rich countries which believe their interests are served by maintenance of the status quo? If the struggle is violent, as seems increasingly probable, will the Church stay with it? And if it does not, and the revolution succeeds without or against it, what Christian influence will survive in the new society? Nobody today has answers to any of these questions.

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THE SCREEN

In *Theater of Blood* Vincent Price, who has spent a whole career committing grotesque murders, at last gets to kill the thespian's favorite victim: Shakespeare. Mr. Price here plays the ghost of an actor who threw himself into the Thames when the drama critics gave their annual award to someone else. The actor, Edward Lionheart, has now returned to get revenge on the critics. He lures each critic into a real-life recreation of a Shakespearean murder scene where the critic himself is forced to play the terminal role. Besides serving as producer, Lionheart also directs, performs, executes, and, worst of all, recites each scene.

Art transgresses into life on several different levels here, each one more campy and enjoyable than the next. First of all, Lionheart and Price both get a chance to surpass their own acting careers, the former by putting on performances that are, for once, real enough to be convincing, and the latter by finally finding a way to make the horror movie a stepping stone to Shakespeare. But Lionheart and Price aren't the only ones who get to ham it up unmercifully, nor are they the only ones with a fictitious chance to satisfy an actor's real desires. Outside of Shakespeare, the person an actor is most likely to kill is a critic; and the veteran actors cast as critics here don't hestitate to avail themselves of the opportunity. Lionheart's mass murder of critics isn't half so foul as the way they're done in by Harry Andrews, Jack Hawkins, Robert Coote, Robert Morley, Arthur Lowe and the other actors who take the critics' parts.

This isn't to say, though, that Mr. Price's own murders of the critics aren't affecting. Certainly he's had enough opportunity to rehearse murder that he ought to be able to play it well by now. From *Dragonwyck* (1946) through all those Edgar Allan Poe adaptations he made in the sixties, Price has probably had to commit more outlandish and gruesome murders than any other actor. In order to preserve his own sanity, he has developed some comic nuances for the role of the ingeniously homicidal psychopath. His rendition of murder follows the pattern set by the murder of Duncan in *Macbeth*. He provides a knocking at the gate afterwards, a comic relief from too dastardly a deed. Whenever the gore gets so thick that the audience's mind, or stomach, might boggle, Price has a way of turning up his own nose at his acts with a saving revulsion.

Price worked out this little flourish when he was making those Poe movies under Roger Corman's direction, and the director of this film, Douglas Hickox, has adapted it even for scenes in which Price doesn't appear. For instance, when the funeral of one critic is interrupted by the body of another being dragged down a long, gravel road tied behind a horse (cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, V, x), Hickox doesn't try to horrify us with a close-up of the corpse. He amuses us instead by showing how the sight of the corpse curdles the pious look on the vicar's face.

But Price himself remains the master of such grimace, as he shows a few scenes later when he must murder Arthur Lowe by laboriously sawing off his head. *Theater of Blood* is the perfect vehicle for this disdain Price has become so good at expressing. The happy confusion of art and life that makes the film entertaining also provides just the right context for Price's mugging. His expression always implies at these moments that he is stepping out of character anyway, to let us know he also feels the gore has now gone too far, and thus to win back our sympathy so he can go on with his performance. He makes us pity the poor actor who must play such roles, and in this way he gets us to bear with him even though we find the role in itself horrible.

Clint Eastwood is another actor who has suffered Price's fate, being condemned to fritter away grade-A talents in a B-movie genre. And like Price, Eastwood has a little gesture of dissociation, a bit of a disowning frown, to help him survive his purgation. The muscles around Eastwood's eyes tighten, his lips part, and he shakes his head ever so slightly in disbelief. Amidst the overacting and obsessive emotion that Price's roles require, his corresponding look is a sudden relaxation, a momentary sighing away of the character. Amidst the underacting and absence of emotion in Eastwood's roles, his look is an intensification, a flicker of evidence that this cowboy can at least feel something.

While both men are registering a certain disgust, however, Eastwood's is always for the hypocrisy in the civilized behavior of other men, not, like Price's, for the barbarity of his own actions. Where Price is dissociating himself from the character he plays, Eastwood is dissociating the character from the society in which he lives. Price transcends the movie in which he appears by stepping out of character, and thus out of the movie, for a few seconds. Eastwood does so by making his character, the gunfighter, into a man apart from his own frontier society—a man so completely apart from the society depicted in his films that he seems to stand out from the film itself.

Of course Eastwood didn't invent the tradition that the gunfighter is a loner. But in his spaghetti Westerns he renewed that tradition and stretched it so some novel extremes. In his latest film, *High Plains Drifter*, he pushes the tradition even further—pushes it beyond its natural limitations right into the supernatural. For it turns out that this drifter is from very high plains indeed. One day he descends from them, like a ghost rider from the sky, into a little mining town called Lago. The good

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people there are awaiting in terror the arrival of three gunfighters who've sworn to burn down their town, so they hire the drifter to protect them.

The fact is, though the townspeople don't recognize him, this drifter has passed through Lago before and carries a grudge of his own. They hire him to keep other gunfighters from turning their town into an inferno, but he now turns it into one himself. Without explaining what his strategy is, he has the townspeople prepare for the gunfighters' arrival by painting their whole town flame red and changing the name on the signpost from Lago to Hell. The painting of the town has only a symbolical significance. His strategy is to take in the townspeople themselves rather than the gunfighters. But we in the audience are taken in, too. We are so used to Westerns where heroes survive by clever, pragmatic strategies that we expect to find behind the drifter's machinations only some naturalistic purpose, not a supernatural meaning.

From *High Noon* to the high plains where this film begins, and including those Sergio Leone Westerns in which Eastwood achieved fame, we have learned to think of our cowboy heroes as the sort of gun-slinging, odds-beating, natural-born wonders that we at first take this drifter to be. Only by pushing such an ultimate hero beyond the borders of realism, by making him into the unnatural wonder that the drifter turns out to be, could Eastwood have expanded this type of Western further. It is a measure of his talents as an actor, and here as his own director, that this coup succeeds. It allows him to descend again into the current vogue of the Western, just as the drifter descends into Lago, so that he may transcend once more the violent, soulless atmosphere of such films.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

The how and why of the National Council of Churches

The Liberalization of American Protestantism

HENRY J. PRATT

Wayne State University Press, $15.95

CHARLES W. ESTUS

As observers have long noted, voluntarism is a key theme in our national life. Voluntary associations have been used by Americans to solve problems as diverse as achieving a proper worship of God, fighting wars, making friends, and putting out fires. While lauded as a virtue of the American character, such voluntarism early became the necessary basis for building and maintaining religious organizations after religion was officially disestablished. Separation of church and state left diverse religious groups to fend for themselves in an atmosphere of religious toleration purchased at the price of their economic and political relevance. Religious diversity would be tolerable as long as churches, temples, and synagogues contributed to but did not interfere with the construction of a "common good" which transcended special religious interests.

In relation to the larger community, Protestants found in an individualistic piety both their claim upon the loyalty of the believer and their peculiar contribution to the "common good." Undertaking the task of character building and moral suasion, institutionalized in preaching and in the Sunday School Movement, their efforts resulted in the individualistic, voluntaristic, and activistic style of mainline Protestantism noted earlier by H. Richard Niebuhr and described by Herberg as the religion of the American Way for Protestant, Catholic and Jew.

In relation to one another, Protestant denominations found themselves competing for the loyalty of believers in order to survive. The test of religious orthodoxy became the believer's attitude toward the denomination and his loyalty to the doctrinal or ritualistic uniqueness of the denomination. This layman's loyalty, in a context of voluntarism, became the critical variable of concern and manipulation for ecclesiastical management. Thus in times of churchly prosperity, as in the 1940s and 50s, religious popularity requires interdenominational cooperation in controlling competition with arrangements of comity, membership transfer, cooperative planning, and the like. In leaner times this means cooperation in revitalizing loyalty with joint evangelistic appeals to piety as in the Preaching Mission of the 30s and now in "Key 73."

In the twentieth century the national symbol of this Protestant cooperation, so delicate to achieve and difficult to maintain among voluntary *and* competing associations, has been the earlier Federal Council of Churches of Christ (founded in 1908) which became the National Council of Churches of Christ in America in 1950. Serving as an interdenominational forum for cooperative programming efforts on commonly recognized problems, the National Council derives its basic support from the national offices of its various member denominations rather than from grass-roots Protestantism. As long as the Council serves those shared denominational interests described above, it can be said to represent Protestantism. Ideologically, however, there is no "Protestant position" to represent; and the Council has, since its inception,

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taken positions on social issues far in advance of its constituents. Practically, however, its efforts have reflected the voluntaristic and individualistic style of Protestantism, generally, seeking to achieve social change through apolitical strategies of research and study programs.

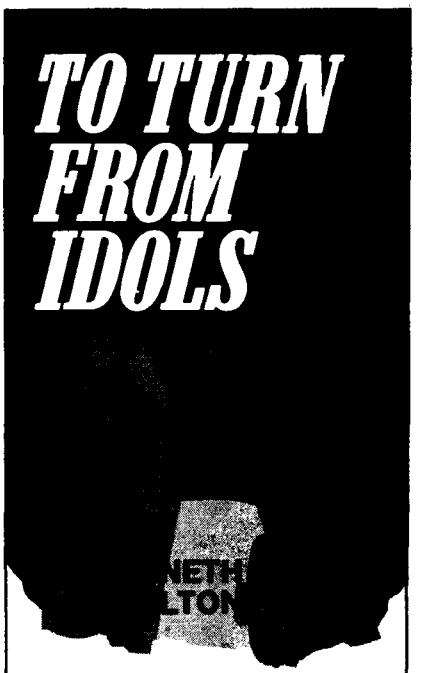
Pratt's interest in the Council is the attempt to change this traditional style of action in the 1960's for two of its program units. He describes in detail the activity of the Commission on Religion and Race (CORR) with its involvement in the black liberation struggle and of the Department of Religious Liberty (DRL) with its involvement in church/state issues underlying federal aid to education and prayer in the public schools. In both instances the Council adopted strategies which directly involved its funds and personnel in attempting to influence political decision-making at the federal level. But because Pratt does focus on these two departments, the reader should be forewarned that his work is not an examination of the "liberalization of Protestantism" since, as we saw above, the Council in no way speaks for or even represents its constituency. Nor is Pratt's work a study of the liberalization of the National Council itself, since the character of interdenominational cooperation as described above continues to require a conservative program strategy in direct service to its constituency.

The question Pratt wishes to consider is the how and why of the Council's liberal strategies on these specific issues. Working with a more general theory of the liberalization of large voluntary associations in the United States, he regards this shift in Council stratagems as one which has taken place in other associations as well. Such associations, he argues, have moved from earlier strategies of voluntary reform by means of education to social reform by means of direct involvement in the political process.

He rightly locates the sources of liberalism in the National Council first in the character of its constituency. Supported by national denominational offices, the Council operates at a great distance from the conservatism of Protestants at the parish level. At the same time, it tends to attract its leadership more and more from among clergy who have had no parish experience, whose careers have moved them from seminary through denominational structures into the Council. A third source, Pratt argues, is the seminaries from which those in the Council came. He notes that a disproportionately large number of the leadership comes out of those seminaries which adopted R. Niebuhr's criticism of the social gospel, a critique which argued for an ethical criticism of the social gospel, a critique which argued for an ethical realism that required Christian participation in the creation of political approximations to true justice. Such clergy came to the Council, then, predisposed to a liberal strategy in programming.

Unhappily Pratt settles too easily for his grand theory as explanation of the Council's liberalization in these limited instances. This leads him to gloss over the careful task of describing how, in fact, the Council became involved in the civil rights struggle and in church /state issues. Thus he provides a detailed history of the Council's activities rather than a hard analysis of the data he has collected. But more importantly, Pratt's concentration on the activities of CORR and DRL leads him to overlook the forces which thrust the Council into the struggles of the 60's. Finally, by overlooking these factors, he is encouraged to assume that liberal strategies are now firmly logged into the Council's programming, failing to recognize that those liberal tendencies collapsed for the Council as they have for so many white and middle-class liberals.

Pratt's careful detailing of the Council's activities is a very helpful description, however, of the limits for significant social and political action imposed upon white Protestantism. For it is possible to argue that the Council, as well as several of the largest denominational contributors to the Council, followed their student movements into the civil rights struggle. And the final col-



Through the centuries, the forms of idolatry may change; but whenever men ascribe omnipotence to other powers than Almighty God, they violate the first commandment.

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lapse of the University Christian Movement in 1968 when faced with the demands of its black caucus, prefiguring the Council's encounter with James Foreman, is witness to the inability of the Council and those denominations to deal with the full implications of their involvement in political action. But this suggests that the most important source of CORR's liberal tactics was precisely the white churchman's inability to relinquish control of the civil rights struggle to blacks. Pushed by the student movement and others within, publicly voicing the cause of justice, but remaining bound to that conservative network of support described earlier, the Council's only option for action was the liberal position which expected from government rather than blacks the solutions to issues raised in the civil rights struggle. Support for federal action was far more acceptable than acquiescence to James Foreman and the black control he represented. And it is significant that CORR had lost all its black staff members before the end of the decade. Nor has the Council continued to use liberal strategies to protect earlier civil rights gains or to gain further implementation of civil rights legislation at all levels. Programs such as the Delta Ministry, in which the Council early participated, continue today in part because they have gone beyond the Council's attempt to liberalize the struggle.

The involvement of the National Council at the federal level with a liberal strategy on church/state issues is not "liberalization" in the same sense as CORR's activity The active role assumed by the Department of Religious Liberty in relation to the Johnson Administration's school-aid legislation in 1965, undertaken with the National Catholic Welfare Conference among others, and in relation to the school prayer issue is a basic stratagem practiced by Protestant churches at every level of government. As was noted above, the churches are forced to maintain themselves in part by controlling interdenominational competition. A part of that control is to insure that no competitor receives disproportionately from government largess. This has resulted in direct negotiations with government in wringing concessions for themselves at local, state, federal, and international levels. The activity of the Department of Religious Liberty on these issues is important, then, not as an indication of the Council's liberalization but as one of the first opportunities to extend the Protestant concept of controlled competition to the arena of interfaith relations, and, at the same time, to "deliberalize" the Catholic church, whose urban membership was already a working part of the New Deal's liberal coalition.

In 1965 the Council with Catholic and Jewish representatives was able to come to an agreement on federal support to parochial schools based on a theory of "child benefit" which defused the concern for "church benefit" that would be disproportionate if direct aid were given to private schools. This arrangement for federal aid is not liberalization, then, but an accommodation by voluntary and competing associations with one another and the federal government as the true broker for the "common good."

Finally, Pratt fails to look closely at the implications of the failure of the Council to follow through with the many recommendations for strategies, both liberal and radical, emerging from the conference on Church and Society held in the fall of 1967. Calling to Detroit a body of laymen, clergy, students, educators, social workers, and professionals, the Council gave to a series of working task-forces the responsibility for analysis and recommendations for action on specific social issues. If the National Council had been liberalized as Pratt contends, the following year would have been the moment for developing liberal strategies on a series of major conference issues. Proposals which would further implicate the Council and its member denominations in the struggles against poverty, inner-city disintegration, educational failures, etc. were not adopted by the Council. That Conference's call to the churches to empty themselves in service to the poor and oppressed established the agonizing limits of the Council's potential for action. Liberalization, as Pratt defines it, would not serve to mediate the uneasy Christian conscience at that moment in the Council's life.

No, Pratt has not described the liberalization of American Protestantism. He has, rather, described the National Council's limited attempt to use liberal stratagems at the very moment

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when the New Deal coalition upon which the liberalization of social action had been built was in collapse. And if the Council had become liberalized as Pratt contends, the irony would be that it did so three decades too late. The nation and the Council now enter a new era when, for many, the politics of liberalism have as little appeal as the churches themselves.

Regenesis

ROBERT GRANAT

Simon and Schuster, $7.95

RICHARD J. NEUHAUS

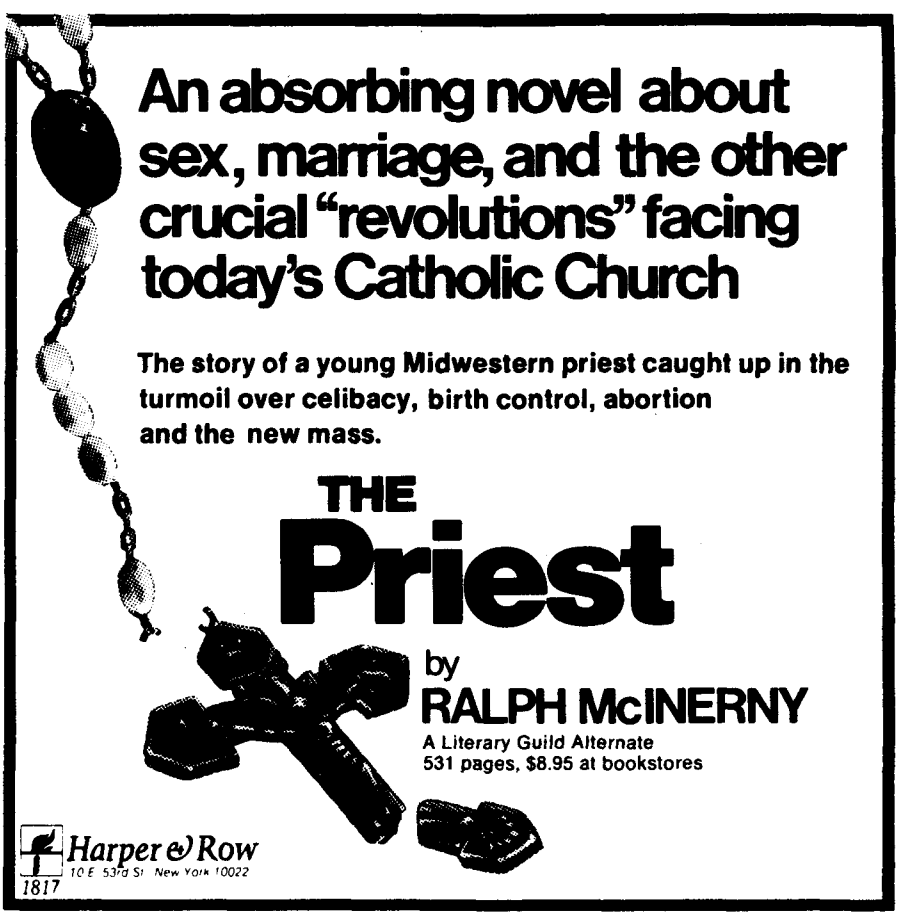
It brings to mind the metaphysical novels of Charles Williams. True, Granat does without Tarot cards, magical rings and gypsy incantations, but the feel is the same, perhaps also the aim. Granat's hero, Bob, an erstwhile New Mexico high school teacher, is clearly cracking up. Four-fifths of the book is what it feels like to be cracking up. It is painful reading. His wife—one gathers there is love here, but it is ridiculously irrelevant—has gone to her folks in the hope that a time alone will enable Bob to pull himself together, or at least survive despair's latest seizure. If things get too bad, there is always Dr. Frank Hoerchner, psychiatrist at Bethlehem House, the home of more or less kindly nuns and shock treatments.

Hoerchner is a caricature of psychiatric dogmatism, which is to say he is true to life. He represents the kind of psychiatry against which Robert Coles has recently and so eloquently polemicized. On the jacket blurb, Coles writes that Bob is engaged in an "unembarrassed quest for what my mother used to call 'God's gracious presence'; Granat has a fine eye and ear for what most of us simply cannot bear to take note of, or have given up being angry at; . . . all this goes to make this a really first-rate novel." After some hesitation, I am compelled to agree. A first-rate novel despite Granat's sometimes crossing the line from narrative to direct pedagogy; despite a religious vision inextricably tied to shimmering votive lights and incense in darkened naves; despite a finally disappointing conclusion that "the miracle of our regenesis is always," as though nothing of historical uniqueness turned Bob from death to life. But maybe all my "despites" arise from the fact that I too am tempted to perceive the story in terms of theological propositions.

In the Mexican town of Michoacán is the church dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Salud. By the accident that is grace Bob is there one Sunday morning, after a week's aimless driving through Mexico with a friend. The story unfolds from, and leads toward, an instant there, the instant in which Bob is reborn. "Toppling inside, he leapt out, into nothing. Nothing caught him, full. Instantly, what had been threatening to happen happened." And he lived.

Hoerchner's "real world" had no place for the unnamable terror. Only momentarily—in moments Hoerchner called health—could Bob contain his intimations of dread and impossible hope within the explanatory apparatus offered by Freudian orthodoxy. Granat does not attempt to romanticize his hero's madness. It is grubby, desperate, destructive of the routines and affections of being human. The absurdities and banalities of our culture come in for rather conventional indictment; they dig deeper the depths out of which Bob cries. But there is no suggestion, à la R. D. Laing, that Bob's anguish is creative response to the culture's madness. The meeting of culture and individual is not one of hell disputed but of hell shared.

The truth is not to be found by rummaging about in the relics of one's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remembered selves. Hoerchner is wrong about that. The answer is external to one's self and culture. Externality to culture is discovered in the modernity-defying, religion-steeped peasant life of Mexico. Externality to self is more elusive to a raging mind that appropriates all its encounters. Nuestra Señora de la Salud cannot be appropriated. She—or maybe it is the setting, maybe it is the peasants scraping forward on their knees to the altar, maybe it is a psychic time that just happened to arrive in this place—is in some sense the "Other" that shatters every construction of one's existence. All the pieces so painfully and tentatively positioned are scattered, and for the first time fit together. That which was most dreaded becomes the source of life, of regenesis.

This is no revival-meeting experience of being born again (although most of us would do well to be more open to the possibilities of regenesis realized under the auspices of sundry professional salvationists); Bob continues to brood obsessively over the gyrations and palpitations of his psychic being. One suspects he never will get his professional, family and personal life together in a way that the Hoerchners will certify as cured. But the terror now has a name, it is Nothingness; and Bob has learned to trust his trusting beyond Nothingness.

It is of course a very old story. What is noteworthy is Granat's skill in juxtaposing conflicting explanations of reality, in carrying the reader with Bob to the liberating point where no decision is required between explanations, where we encounter the decision already made, apart from ourselves, maybe despite ourselves, and we are surprised by trust in the Encountered.

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Steinfels (cont.)

ever, is no less a reality for Mr. Y.'s and my black neighbors; they too are mugged in the elevator and sometimes wait anxiously for wives to return at night; unlike Mr. Y., they do not have the option of finally fleeing to safer areas.

Mr. Y.'s racism is as much a racism as that Austrian anti-Semitism which provided the seedbed for Adolf Hitler's

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warped views and the ultimate consequences of which Mr. Y. escaped by only a few years. What conclusions flow from this fact, I am not sure. I doubt that politicians have much to gain by denouncing Mr. Y., or liberal programs by trying to convert him. I am not particularly interested in blaming him—though Mr. Y. is a moral adult and therefore not beyond blame. I write of the fact of his racism only because, in a season when new confusions are being hurriedly constructed, mirror-like, on old ones, it happens to be true.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 323)

more about the opinions of the distinguished mathematician, André W , than appears in the published statements, I would think it not an unfair inference that his apparently very negative judgment of the quality of Bellah's scholarly work probably reflected this type of attitude."

I would be about the last one to "derogate" the subject of religion, as perhaps you know. Simone Weil was my sister, and I have taken a not inconsiderable part in the publication of her (largely posthumous) works.

Nor have I noticed among my colleagues any trace of the view of religion described by Freeman Dyson. But perhaps, as he moves among physicists, he knows better. ANDRE WEIL

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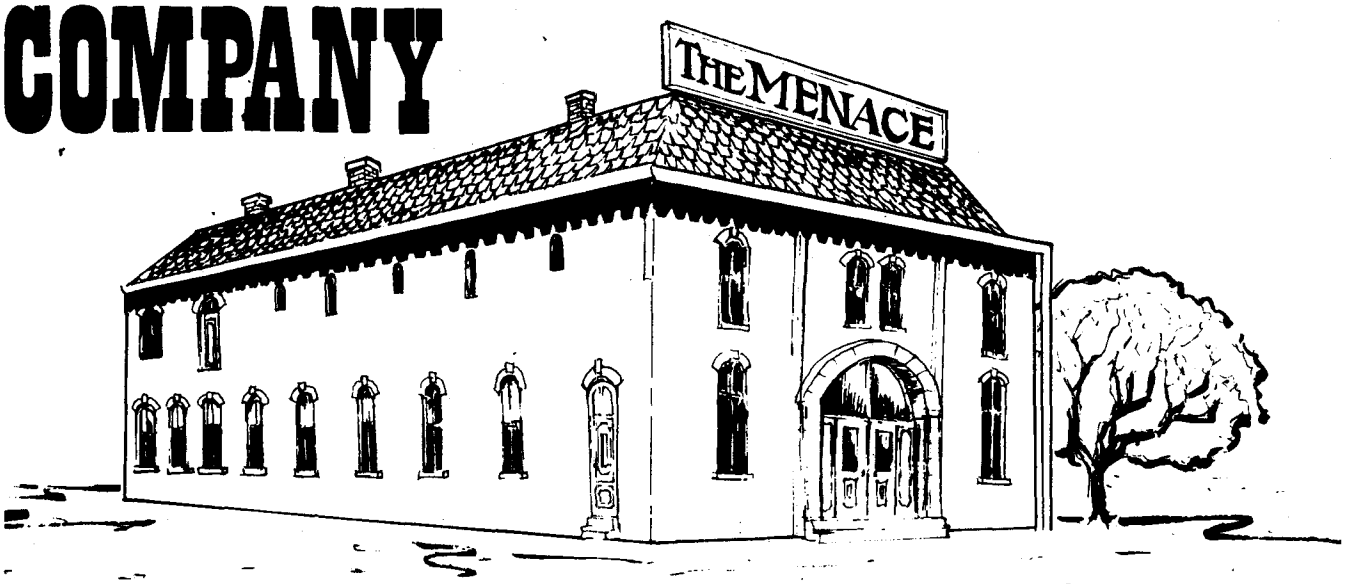

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